United Nations E/2008/L.10*

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
3 July 2008

Original: English

Substantive session of 2008
30 June-25 July 2008
Agenda item 2 (b), (c) and (d)

High-level segment: Development Cooperation Forum

Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development

Thematic discussion: promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development, taking into account current challenges

Draft ministerial declaration of the 2008 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, submitted by the President of the Council

Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations participating in the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2008 of the Economic and Social Council, held in New York from 30 June to 3 July 2008,

Having considered the themes of the high-level segment, "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development" and "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development, taking into account current challenges",

Conscious of the multiple, interrelated and mutually reinforcing challenges confronting the international community and their relationship to the themes chosen for the substantive session of 2008 of the Economic and Social Council and the need for a concerted and prompt response,

Welcoming the holding of the first Development Cooperation Forum and the second annual ministerial review,

* Reissued for technical reasons.

08-40757* (E) 090708

Underscoring the need for coherence and coordination to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in addressing the current challenges and committed to ensuring that the Economic and Social Council discharges in a dynamic manner the responsibilities assigned to it by the Charter of the United Nations and reinforced in the 2005 World Summit Outcome[1] and General Assembly resolution 61/16 of 20 November 2006 on the strengthening of the Council,

Reaffirming the commitments to the global partnership for development as set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[2] the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development[3] and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation")[4],

Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General prepared for consideration at the high-level segment[5] and the deliberations held in the high-level segment,

Have adopted the following declaration:

1. We recognize that we meet at a critical juncture in our efforts to realize the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. We further recognize that we face multiple challenges in our efforts to achieve these goals, including financial instability and uncertainty, slowing global economic growth, and rising food and fuel prices, as well as the impacts of environmental degradation and the impacts of climate change. All of these challenges require early concerted action. We are concerned about the negative impacts of these risks on sustained economic growth and sustainable development, particularly in developing countries. We are also concerned that these risks might further widen inequalities both among and within nations.

2. We therefore call for urgent individual and collective actions, both short and long term, to stem the impacts of these risks and place the global economy on a firm sustainable foundation. We need to ensure that our development gains are not reversed and that our future efforts are not undermined. We are determined to take concerted actions to promote progress towards the realization of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

3. We reaffirm that development is a central goal by itself and that sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions constitutes a key element of the overarching framework of United Nations activities. We recognize that development, peace and security, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

4. We call for the full implementation of the global partnership for development and commitments made by all countries and request the Economic and Social Council to continue to review the progress made in the implementation of the

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[1] See General Assembly resolution 60/1.

[2] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[3] *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[4] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[5] E/2008/12 and E/2008/68.

outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, and their follow-up processes, in the economic, social and related fields, including the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

5. We take note with appreciation of the voluntary initiative of the Government of Bahrain to hold regional consultations on the annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council at Manama on 1 and 2 June 2008[6] and the holding of high-level symposiums by the Governments of Austria, Egypt and Italy, in Vienna, Cairo and Rome, in preparation for the Development Cooperation Forum.

6. We welcome the enhanced participation of various stakeholders, including from civil society and the private sector, and recognize the need to continue to encourage and facilitate their engagement in efforts to achieve sustainable development.

7. We welcome the voluntary national presentations made by Belgium, Chile, Finland, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Luxembourg, Kazakhstan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United Republic of Tanzania.[7]

8. We reiterate our commitment to ensuring the achievement of sustainable development in all countries, integrating economic growth, social development and environmental protection, and to making that goal the central objective of national development strategies and international cooperation. We call on countries that have not yet developed policy frameworks for integrating economic, social and environmental objectives to consider adopting and implementing such frameworks. We recognize that a facilitative international environment and appropriate international cooperation is important in this regard.

9. We recognize the importance of strengthening indicators that integrate the three pillars of sustainable development.

10. We reaffirm our commitment to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, recognizing that they are key actors in development, and to identifying and accelerating concrete actions towards that end.

11. We recognize the increasing rate of deterioration of the global environment in many important areas, the continued challenges of environmental protection and the serious implications for sustainable development, and strongly stress the need to address critical issues of long-term global sustainability, taking into account the principles contained in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[8] including, inter alia, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

12. We reiterate the commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to pursue a more efficient and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity[9] and the achievement by 2010

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[6] See E/2008/88 for the report on the consultations.

[7] See, inter alia, E/2008/70, E/2008/75, E/2008/78, E/2008/79, E/2008/81 and E/2008/85.

[8] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[9] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

of a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity, which will require action at all levels, including the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the provision of new and additional financial and technical resources to developing countries.

13. We resolve to support and strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[10] with a view to addressing causes of desertification and land degradation, as well as poverty resulting from land degradation, through, inter alia, the mobilization of adequate and predictable financial resources, the transfer of technology and capacity-building at all levels.

14. We acknowledge that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions.

15. We reaffirm our commitment to the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[11] as contained in article 2 thereof, namely, to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.

16. We remain deeply concerned that all countries, in particular developing countries including least developed countries and small island developing States and African countries, face increased risks from the negative effects of climate change and we further stress the need to urgently address adaptation needs relating to such effects.

17. We reaffirm that responses to climate change should be coordinated with social and economic development in an integrated manner, with a view to avoiding adverse impact on the latter, taking into full account the legitimate priority needs of developing countries for the achievement of sustained economic growth and the eradication of poverty.

18. We welcome the decisions adopted during the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 3 to 15 December 2007, including the Bali Action Plan, which launched a comprehensive process aimed at enabling the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, now, up to and beyond 2012, in order to reach an agreed outcome and adopt a decision at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties.[12] We take note of the work under way in the open-ended ad hoc working

[10] Ibid., vol. 1954, No. 33480.
[11] Ibid., vol. 1771, No. 30822.
[12] See FCCC/CP/2007/6/Add.1, decision 1/CP.13.

group of the parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[13] established under decision 1/CMP.1.[14]

19. We call for efforts by all countries to promote sustainable management of all types of forests. We recognize the need for the provision by the international community of increased support for the efforts of developing countries towards the promotion of sustainable forest management.

20. We stress the importance of diversifying energy supply by developing advanced, cleaner, more efficient, affordable and cost-effective energy technologies, including fossil fuel technologies and renewable energy technologies, hydro included, and their transfer to developing countries on concessional terms as mutually agreed, and, with a sense of urgency, of substantially increasing the global share of renewable energy sources with the objective of increasing its contribution to total energy supply.

21. We emphasize that it is essential to address the challenges and opportunities posed by biofuels, in view of the world's food security, energy and sustainable development needs.

22. We express our concern at the current situation of soaring food prices and underline that the global food crisis poses a serious challenge to the fight against poverty and hunger as well as to the efforts by developing countries to attain food security and achieve the objectives of reducing by half the number of undernourished people by no later than 2015 and other internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. We reiterate that the global food crisis has multiple and complex causes and that its consequences require a comprehensive and coordinated response in the short, medium and long term by national Governments and the international community.

23. The global food situation calls for a strong commitment from Governments as well as from all other stakeholders. We call upon all donors and the United Nations system to increase their assistance to developing countries, in particular least developed countries and those that are most negatively affected by high food prices. We welcome the holding of the High-level Conference on World Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy in Rome from 3 to 5 June 2008 and note the importance of the implementation of its outcome. We also welcome the convening of a special meeting of the Economic and Social Council on the global food crisis from 20 to 22 May 2008. We take note of the recent establishment by the Secretary-General of the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis and encourage its continued engagement with Member States.

24. We reiterate the urgency of accelerating progress in the implementation of the priorities for action in water, sanitation and human settlements agreed at the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development by providing access to safe drinking water and sanitation services, building partnerships for capacity-building and technology transfer, improving the efficiency of water utilities, engaging stakeholders in the implementation process, strengthening monitoring and reporting and implementing integrated water resources management, through raising public awareness; and integrating water and sanitation strategies

[13] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

[14] "Consideration of commitments for subsequent periods for Parties included in Annex I to the Convention under Article 3, paragraph 9, of the Kyoto Protocol" (see FCCC/KP/CMP/2005/8/Add.1).

into national development plans, mobilizing adequate financial resources and using available financial resources more efficiently and ensuring targeted, effective implementation by all relevant actors, including incorporation of a gender perspective and effective monitoring of implementation, in order to reach the 2015 objective of halving the proportion of people who are unable to access or afford safe drinking water and the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation.

25. We recognize the important role of cities and other urban areas and the challenges of urbanization. We therefore call for promoting sustainable urbanization, improving lives of slum-dwellers and encouraging practical solutions to these challenges.

26. We reaffirm the importance of investing in infrastructure for rural development and agriculture. We further recognize the importance of non-farming economic activities in eradicating poverty in rural areas. In this regard, we recognize the in-depth discussion at the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and we look forward to recommendations of the Commission at its seventeenth session that will advance rural development.

27. We recognize that agriculture plays a crucial role in addressing the needs of a growing global population and is inextricably linked to poverty eradication, especially in developing countries. Integrated and sustainable agriculture and rural development approaches are therefore essential to achieving enhanced food security and food safety in an environmentally sustainable way.

28. We recognize the crucial importance of enhanced access of the rural poor, women and men, to productive assets, in particular land and water, and stress that priority attention should be given to the adoption of policies and the implementation of laws that guarantee well-defined and enforceable land- and water-use rights and promote legal security of tenure, while recognizing the existence of different national laws and/or systems of land access and tenure.

29. We call for the full, timely and effective achievement of the goals and targets of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,[15] the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries,[16] the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[17] and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States[18] so as to address the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

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[15] A/CONF.191/13, chap. II.

[16] *Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28 and 29 August 2003* (A/CONF.202/3), annex I.

[17] *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States , Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[18] *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

30. We recognize that poverty and inequality are a concern for all countries regardless of their level of development. We also recognize that middle-income countries are still faced with significant areas of poverty and that efforts to address these challenges should be supported.

31. We emphasize the need for continued, coordinated and effective international support for achieving the development goals in countries emerging from conflict and in those recovering from natural disasters.

32. We remain concerned that many countries in Africa are currently not on track to achieve, by 2015, any of the goals set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and, in this regard, emphasize that concerted efforts and continued support are required to fulfil the commitments to address the special needs of Africa. We welcome the efforts by development partners to strengthen cooperation with the New Partnership for Africa's Development[19] and the progress made by the African countries in fulfilling their commitments in respect of the implementation of the New Partnership. In this regard, we look forward to the convening of the high-level meeting on the theme: "Africa's development needs: implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward", scheduled for 22 September 2008, which will review the implementation of all commitments made by and to Africa with a view to comprehensively addressing the special development needs of the continent.

33. We call upon all countries to promote good governance, which is essential for sustainable development, and reaffirm that sound economic policies, solid democratic institutions responsive to the needs of the people and improved infrastructure are the basis for sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and employment-creation and that freedom, peace and security, domestic stability, respect for human rights, including the right to development, the rule of law, gender equality and market-oriented policies and an overall commitment to just and democratic societies, are also essential and mutually reinforcing.

34. We reaffirm that good governance at the international level is fundamental for achieving sustainable development; that in order to ensure a dynamic and enabling international economic environment, it is important to promote global economic governance through addressing the issue of the international finance, trade, technology and investment patterns that have an impact on the development prospects of developing countries; and that, to that end, the international community should take all necessary and appropriate measures, including ensuring support for structural and macroeconomic reform, achieving a comprehensive solution to the external debt problem and increasing the market access of developing countries.

35. We reaffirm the commitments made in the Doha Ministerial Declaration,[20] the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration[21] and the decision of the General Council of the World Trade Organization of 1 August 2004[22] to meaningfully integrate the developing and the least developed countries into the multilateral trading system and call for the successful and early conclusion of the

[19] A/57/304, annex.

[20] See A/C.2/56/7, annex.

[21] World Trade Organization document WT/MIN (05)/DEC. Available from http://docsonline.wto.org.

[22] World Trade Organization document WT/L/579. Available from http://docsonline.wto.org.

Doha Round of trade negotiations, with the full realization of the development dimensions of the Doha Work Programme.[23]

36. We call for the early conclusion and successful development-oriented outcome of the Doha Round of trade negotiations, adhering fully to the agreed mandate in the Doha Ministerial Declaration, within the framework adopted by the General Council of the World Trade Organization in its decision of 1 August 2004 and the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration.

37. We reaffirm our commitment to promote, facilitate and finance, as appropriate, access to, and the development, transfer and diffusion of, environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how, in particular to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, as set out in chapter 34 of Agenda 21.[24]

38. We recognize that appropriate, affordable and sustainable agricultural technologies can play an important role in helping Member States alleviate poverty, eradicate hunger and mitigate the global food crisis, and call upon the international community to make greater efforts to promote development and transfer of appropriate technologies.

39. We strongly stress that increased financial resources should be mobilized for meeting the priority objectives of sustainable development.

40. We reaffirm that each country must take primary responsibility for its own development and that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized in the achievement of sustainable development. We also recognize that national efforts should be complemented by supportive global programmes, measures and policies aimed at expanding the development opportunities of developing countries, while taking into account national conditions and ensuring respect for national ownership, strategies and sovereignty.

41. We reiterate that in our common pursuit of growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development, a critical challenge lies in ensuring the necessary internal conditions for mobilizing domestic savings, both public and private, sustaining adequate levels of productive investment and increasing human capacity. A crucial task is to enhance the efficacy, coherence and consistency of macroeconomic policies. An enabling domestic environment is vital for mobilizing domestic resources, increasing productivity, reducing capital flight, encouraging the private sector, and attracting and making effective use of international investment and assistance. Efforts to create such an environment should be supported by the international community.

42. We acknowledge efforts by developed countries to increase resources for development, including commitments by some developed countries to increase official development assistance. However, we note with concern the overall decline in official development assistance in 2006 and 2007, and call for the fulfilment of all official development assistance-related commitments, including the

[23] See A/C.2/56/7, annex.

[24] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

commitments made by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance by 2015 and to reach the target of at least 0.5 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance by 2010, as well as the target of 0.15-0.20 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to least developed countries, and urge those developed countries that have not yet done so to make concrete efforts in this regard in accordance with their commitments.

43. We welcome the efforts of some developed countries, which are on target to meet the commitments made in terms of increased official development assistance.

44. We further welcome recent efforts and initiatives to enhance the quality of aid and to increase its impact, including the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and resolve to take concrete, effective and timely action in implementing all agreed commitments on aid effectiveness, with clear monitoring and deadlines, including through further aligning assistance with countries' strategies, building institutional capacities, reducing transaction costs and eliminating bureaucratic procedures, making progress on untying aid, enhancing the absorptive capacity and financial management of recipient countries and strengthening the focus on development results.

45. We also emphasize the special importance of a timely, effective, comprehensive and durable solution to the debt problems of developing countries, since debt financing and debt relief can contribute to economic growth and development.

46. We welcome the fact that the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative have enabled heavily indebted poor countries to increase their expenditures on health, education and other social services consistent with national priorities, development plans and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.